



Well begun is half done - Aristotle

At Let's Live we had a very Progressive beginning which made things easier for us in the due course. By December we had our website ready and running and we started approaching friends and family for start-up fund. Our 7 month residential program at kanthari came to an end in the middle of Dec 2017 with an inspiring session of kanthari Talks. It was the first public speech where the concept of Let's Live was introduced to the general public. It was taken well and we got our first sponsor from the event itself. A family foundation - Nabeesath Beevi Foundation (NBF) - based out of Trivandrum, Kerala was motivated by the ideology of Let's Live and wanted to support our work. They had a space in the centre of the city which they offered for free for our use .This sped up our initial administrative work of officially registering Let's Live as a public charitable trust on 17 January 2018. Meanwhile we sent the proposal of our first project - The Halfway Café to NBF and started discussions on how to set it up.

Our first set back

We thought of using the space offered by NBF as the space for The Halfway Café. However during our final discussion we found out, the café could only use the space barring an office space which co-existed in that floor. Until they found an alternate space for the office, they wanted their office also to function there. This did not align with the open space concept of the Halfway Café and the project was put on hold. To add to this, all our fund raising proposals sent during December 2017 and January 2018 were rejected outright , even seed funding because of the slightly high cost associated with running a Café model service centre.

Slow, but steady progress

The intensity of the first set back was a bit heavy that we decided to take things slow and rework on the strategy of how to raise funds. Meanwhile we started progressing on the Administrative activities of Let's Live - we obtained PAN (Permanent Account Number) for identification and applied to start a bank account where we could receive donations. We had set up a registered office and celebrated February 13 as the Foundation day of Let's Live.





Networking with Market Space

Once the administrative activities were in place, we started to focus more on Networking. Since our way of service delivery was going to be a Café model, the first thing we did was to study the Cafes in the city, how it operated, why people visited the café, how many youths were there, was the café contributing to socialization and how helpful such a place was. We were also exploring opportunities of possible collaboration with nearby service providers such as Café, Reading Room, Fitness centres, etc.

Networking with Influencers

Once we studied the market place we started reaching out to Influencers such as the Member of Parliament (Dr. Shashi Tharoor), Department of Social Justice (Biju Prabhakar IAS), District Mental Health Program (Dr. Kiran), etc . to understand various government grants and schemes and programs that are currently being run for improving the mental/emotional health of children and youngsters across schools and colleges in Trivandrum. A visit to schools, community health centres, and primary health centres, Anganwadis etc. gave a whole new perspective from various levels.

Public Charitable Trust- Doct. No 12/2018/4 on 17/01/2018. TC 48/536, Manacaud PO, Trivandrum -695009, Kerala, India. Phone: +91 8078944613. Email:letslivekerala@gmail.com

For more information log on to www.letslivekerala.org



Networking with peers

After meeting with the Influencers, the next step in our journey was to meet the peers who were working directly or indirectly for the welfare - especially the mental well-being of people. Networking was done mainly via 2 channels - one was through Groups working inside Technopark, Trivandrum - an IT space in Kerala where the stress rates are reportedly high and most numbers of employees are youth through groups like EWIT (Empowering Women in IT). The second was through similar NGOs working for the cause of providing support to those with Mental Health Issues such as *Maithri* - which was an NGO formed for prevention of suicide and is a part of Befrienders Worldwide, MEHAC MHAT, Disha 1058, Mitra 181, etc.

Establishing personal relationships with potential Donors

Since we were at a nascent stage, we had a huge set back to solicit funds from donors or CSR who did not know Let's Live and the reason for its existence. So we started building personal relationships - an opportunity to know each other better and reason for existence of Let's Live. We have built some beautiful relationships based on mutual trust and respect and these donors are now offering to bring in help in whichever way they could.

Establishing presence and credibility

Slowly, but steadily we started to gain visibility. We got invitation from one of the IT companies in Technopark to take a session on Mental and Emotional well-being for their employees in May-June 2018. We were also approached by a government agency to work on a Government Project for Capacity Building to youth in a troubled slum area in Trivandrum (Rajaji Nagar Colony). The first meeting of this project is scheduled for May.

An invitation to the Corporate Space

An invitation from LinkedIn to come for a 15 minute motivational speech came as a pleasant surprise. It felt like a recognition especially after the initial setback. An opportunity to take the concept of the Halfway Café to corporate space was extended by LinkedIn which could be leveraged sometime in near future once the model is tested and standardised.





Our first beneficiary walks in...and we take the initial steps

He is 22 years old. Highly educated. Lost between career choices. Wanting to excel and be different than the rest. Somewhere he lost his hope. Since then he's been ideating about suicide. Tried twice but miraculously saved. One morning he reached out to Let's Live and since then we are working together to save a life and thereby many lives.

High hopes with plan to start small- Halfway Café all the way

We plan to open our first public project - The Halfway Café on 9 June 2018 inside the Kanthari campus. This will be a soft launch where we test the idea and how receptive the community would be to this mode of service delivery. If this model is successful we will standardise it and scale it up to be reused at various districts across Kerala as well as take it to the corporate world in India which could potentially save many lives and break the stigma associated with Mental Health. Fingers Crossed!

Sherin Noordheen

Founder-Director

28 April 2018

Trivandrum, Kerala

Public Charitable Trust- Doct. No 12/2018/4 on 17/01/2018. TC 48/536, Manacaud PO, Trivandrum -695009, Kerala, India. Phone: +91 8078944613. Email:letslivekerala@gmail.com

For more information log on to www.letslivekerala.org

